

## REACTION TO THE FRENCH COLONIZATION OF INDO-CHINA

there was an unanswerable contradiction in French policy. A native press and opinion were deliberately created and simultaneously stifled: traditional education was destroyed and its substitute inadequate in both quality and quantity. Naturalization was a requisite to professional promotion, but it was grudgingly given and it uprooted the native from his setting. The Annamites could not appreciate the complications of French colonial tradition. They felt that France took back with one hand what had been given with the other. Oriental pride is dangerous dynamite. A personal slight may make an Annamite into a revolutionary leader. Nguyen Thai Hoc, founder of the Annamite Nationalist Party, as a young man addressed numerous reform projects to the Governor General, who failed even to acknowledge their receipt. One is reminded of Madame Rolland.

The average Annamite who does not encounter these obstacles to his rise in the world has other grievances against the administration. There is, for instance, inequality of treatment before the law. The same crime committed by an Annamite and a Frenchman is given a totally disparate verdict. To begin with, there is not enough guarantee of justice for natives in the composition of the Courts. In recent years there has been a certain improvement in severity shown towards Europeans guilty of aggression towards natives, but a fundamentally unfair discrimination remains. The average Annamite complains of a lack of security. Though he cannot deny that peace is far better preserved than formerly, thefts and brigandage have not ceased. He wanted for many years, and has finally achieved, a new codification of the law, the abolition of debt imprisonment, access to the Bar, the regularization of

concessions—all political liberties sanctioned by the Revolution of '89. There still remains, however, to have the regime of the *indig&nat* and the Criminal Commission abolished—in both of which the interests of the colonizing power still triumph over abstract justice. The average native needs more protection from the extortions of native officials and usurers; more stability in the administration, both as regards policy and functionaries; and less red tape and formalities that consume time and money. The Annamite is already too prone to routine without having his slight bent towards initiative curtailed by incessant bureaucratic interference.

Military service is forced labour for the average native, who is always a civilian at heart. From two to four years of continuous service contrast with the intermittent three-month periods of the old Annamite government. Barracks routine differs unpleasantly from their family